



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES HELD IN ROOM 739
OF THE KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012**

Monday, April 18, 2011

10:00 AM

Roll Call

Present: Chair Curry, Vice Chair Friedman, Vice Chair Olivas, Vice Chair Savelle, Commissioner Berger, Commissioner Biondi, Commissioner Franzen, Commissioner Kang, Commissioner Kleinberg, Commissioner McClaney, Commissioner Murray, Commissioner Sorkin, Commissioner Trevino-Powell and Commissioner Williams

Excused: Commissioner Rudnick

1. Call to order. (11-1484)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:07 a.m.

2. Introduction of April 18, 2011, meeting attendees. (11-1485)

Self introductions were made.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

3. Approval of Agenda of April 4, 2011. (11-1486)

On motion of Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner McClaney, unanimously carried (Commissioner Rudnick being absent), this item was approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes for March 21, 2011. (11-1487)

On motion of Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Murray, unanimously carried (Commissioner Rudnick being absent), this item was approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

DRAFT

II. REPORTS

5. Chair's Report by Patricia Curry, Chair, for April 18, 2011. (11-1488)

Chair Curry reported the following:

- **Form 700 (Statement of Economic Interest) were received and filed for all Commission members. Thanks to all Commissioners for the timely response.**
- **Staff is contacting Commissioners who must complete their AB 1234 Ethics Training. This training may be completed online, or through an instructor-led course. Staff may be contacted to schedule for the instructor-led course.**
- **The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is hosting a Transition Age Youth (TAY) Conference on May 17, 2011. The TAY Conference includes workshops in; Advocacy, Best Practices, Co-Occurring Disorders and additional topics. Registration forms are available on the Commission's information table or from staff.**
- **United Friends of the Children in partnership with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Los Angeles County Departments of Children and Family Services and Probation, and The Teague Family Foundation will host the Celebration 2011 Event, which honors the academic achievements of foster youth. Event will take place on June 7, 2011 at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. Registration forms for this event are available at the Commission's information table or from staff.**
- **The Chief Executive Office (CEO) was scheduled to provide a report to the Board of Supervisors (Board) at its meeting scheduled for April 19, 2011, regarding possible structural changes within the CEO's office. Acting DCFS Director, Ms. Antonia Jiménez noted that the report was not presented to the Board because Mayor Antonovich held it.**

After discussion, Chair Curry's verbal report was received and filed.

6. Report by Commissioners Kleinberg and Biondi regarding the "Disconnected and Underserved: Improving Education Funders Group" event, hosted by the Educational Funders Group, co-sponsored by the Commission. (11-1616)

Commissioners Biondi and Kleinberg reported the following:

- **The Disconnected and Underserved: Improving Education for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System** event was held on March 31, 2011. Both Commissioners attended this event.
- The Commission co-sponsored the event in name only. The event featured a distinguished panel of speakers who discussed educational services in the juvenile justice system.

Panel speakers included: Paul Cummins, Chief Executive Officer, New Visions Foundation; Laura Faer, Directing Attorney, Public Counsel Law Center Children's Rights Project; Carrie Miller, Acting Manager of the Service Integration Branch, CEO; Constance L. Rice, Co-Director, The Advancement Project in Los Angeles, and Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Second District.

After discussion, Commissioner Biondi and Kleinberg's verbal reports were received and filed.

III. PRESENTATIONS

7. Presentation by Antonia Jiménez, Interim Director of the Department of Children and Family Services on the Child Death Report. (11-1791)

Ms. Jimenez distributed and discussed a copy of a report by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) dated March 31, 2011, in response to the Board Motion (Item 48-B, Agenda of October 12, 2010) regarding reporting aggregate and trend data on child deaths. She added the following and responded to questions posed by the Commission:

- **On October 12, 2010, and further amended on November 3, 2010, on motion of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Mayor Michael D. Antonovich, the Board directed the CEO, in consultation with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and County Counsel, to compile vital Los Angeles County child death statistics for the past ten years.**
- **A work group consisting of CEO, DCFS, and County Counsel members convened in October 2010 to review and analyze available aggregate data on child fatalities. It was determined that the state's Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) was the appropriate data to use for the assessment.**
- **The workgroup attempted to compile child fatality data that CWS/CMS does not systematically track, such as trends and**

circumstances. However, because this data is not a mandatory data field within CWS/CMS, it was not included in the child fatality report. It is understood that concise data on child fatality trends, such as gang-related shootings and co-sleeping deaths, will allow for more informed policy discussions related to child welfare, and will be explored.

- In June 2005, the Coroner began reporting all child deaths to DCFS. Prior to that, only child homicides that were suspected to have been caused by abuse and/or neglect by a parent or caregiver were reported. As a result of this reporting, the number of child deaths reported increased.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Jiménez added the following:

- Gang-related fatalities were one of the trends that was not included in the report. Unfortunately, the number of juveniles between the ages of 14-17, who were on Probation, and died as result of gang-related circumstances, is unavailable. This information is critical and DCFS will review Probation data.
- The 41 child fatalities that were determined to be a result of abuse or neglect will be input into a new database that DCFS is developing. The database will assist to further analyze each child fatality that resulted from abuse or neglect. Upon completion of analysis, findings will be provided to the Commission.
- DCFS is currently analyzing data from calendar year 2008, which is when SB 39 came into effect, and also for 2009. Data from 2010 was validated for the child fatality report. Validating all three years will give DCFS a better understanding of the data, and will enable DCFS to determine where in the system a child died and the circumstance surrounding the death of the child.
- Suicide data was not included in the child fatality report primarily because the information was not entered accurately into CWS/CMS.
- 25 of the 200 child deaths with DCFS history reported in the aggregate data for calendar year 2010, upon further review, were determined to not have DCFS history.

- **DCFS investigates approximately 80-85 percent of hotline referrals; the national standard is 65 percent.**
- **In December 2010, DCFS had approximately 7,000 Emergency Referrals (ER) over sixty days that were not investigated; currently that number has been reduced to 1,800.**
- **Moving forward, DCFS will use a two-pronged approach to ensure that this level of backlog does not reoccur. Regional offices that had over 600 cases with investigations pending were given temporary staff to assist with the backlog. Additionally, experienced staff was reassigned ER to assist in reducing the number of cases over sixty days; volunteers were also considered to help reduce the number. The other regional offices, whose ER cases over sixty days were less than 600, were only given volunteers to assist in their reduction of ER cases over sixty days.**
- **DCFS just rolled out Dragon Speak, which is software that converts speech into written text and is then transferred to CWS/CMS; this software has proven to be beneficial to the social workers.**
- **Data on open cases or prior referrals that are re-entries is currently not available; however, DCFS is working on gathering such data.**

The Commission requested that Ms. Jimenez return to a future Commission meeting to report on future developments, specifically regarding what child death data DCFS is collecting, the analysis of the data, and what policy changes DCFS will consider once DCFS has this data.

After discussion, Ms. Jimenez's verbal report was received and filed.

- 8. Presentation by Manuel Rivas, Manager, State Legislative Policy Analysis, Chief Executive Office, on State and County Budget Realignment. (11-1576)**

Mr. Rivas distributed a memo from the CEO, dated February 4, 2011, regarding the State Budget, presented an updated analysis of the Governor's Realignment Proposal, and responded to questions posed by the Commission.

- **The State of California is facing a \$25 billion budget deficit. Governor Jerry Brown is proposing a \$12 billion cut to programs and \$12 billion in revenue extensions. Currently there is a stalemate regarding revenue extensions which are set to expire June 30, 2011.**

- On March 24, 2011, the Governor, with the support of the legislature, approved approximately \$11 billion in solutions to closing the budget deficit, approximately \$8 billion in cuts, from health and human services programs and \$3 billion from revenue transfers.
- From the County's perspective, this is the fourth year that the State is facing a large budget deficit. The County has lost approximately \$515 million in the last three years. Under the current proposal the County is facing a loss of \$366 million.
- To date, the Governor has not been able to place the tax extensions on the June ballot. If the tax extensions are not successful, the Governor may go to an all cuts budget.
- The Governor's budget proposal would designate approximately \$6 billion in funding to initiate the shift of program responsibilities from the State to the counties for various public safety programs including: emergency services and fire, court security, local public safety programs, lower-level offenders, adult parole and juvenile justice. The proposal also expands the definition of public safety to include: child welfare service, foster care, adult protective services and certain mental health services.
- The potential transfer of program responsibilities from the State to Los Angeles County would impact the County by approximately \$1.4 billion in FY 2011-12. The Governor proposed to provide \$5.9 billion in funding for the realigned programs by asking California voters to approve the extension of the 1.0 percent sales tax rate increase (\$4.5 billion) and the 0.5 percent Vehicle License Fee (VLF) rate increase (\$1.4 billion).

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Mr. Rivas added the following:

- The counties do have some protection from the transfer of program responsibilities without appropriate funding, such as Proposition 1A from 2004, which requires the State to provide funding for any transfer or realignment of program responsibilities to the County. The Board directed the CEO's office to work with appropriate staff in Sacramento to find a solution that works for both the State and the County.

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- One of the biggest concerns at this time is the Vehicle License Fee, which provides approximately \$500 million in statewide revenue, which the County receives, approximately \$135 million. Approximately, \$100 million is used to fund various Probation programs.
 - The Board has taken a position on the realignment proposal and is trying to place a constitutional amendment before the voters to continue the tax extensions. Because the realignment proposal would only provide funds to the County for five years, there will be language within the constitutional amendment to address the issue of funding after five years.

After discussion, the report by Mr. Rivas was received and filed.

IV. COMMITTEE/WORKGROUP UPDATES

9. Childhood Wellness Committee

- Adelina Sorkin, Committee Chair (11-1577)

Commissioner Sorkin reported the following:

- The Childhood Wellness Committee (Committee) was formed in 2007.
- At its last meeting, the Committee reviewed its accomplishments. The Committee's accomplishments included: involvement and collaboration with Judge Michael Nash, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile and Dependency Courts on childhood obesity, and a letter to the Board on behalf of the Commission for Children and Families commending the Board on its commitment to child wellness and the passage of the April 14, 2009, Board Motion which directed the CEO to develop a Childhood Wellness Task Force and a subsequent child wellness policy.
- The Committee was recently informed of the new CEO staff that is charged with the monitoring of the child wellness policy. The Commission would like clarification on some of the language contained in the policy, specifically regarding Departments' roles or responsibilities in providing training to parents and providers on the issues surrounding childhood obesity. Another concern that the Committee has is the effects that psychotropic medication has in relation to weight gain.

Chair Curry stated she contacted the CEO regarding the Child Wellness Policy, and the CEO offered to meet with the Committee regarding the status of the policy.

- On August 30, 2010, the Committee met with members of the Probation Department regarding the food being served at Juvenile Halls. During this meeting the menus from the Juvenile Halls were discussed, and the Committee was informed that a new menu was underway. To date, the Committee has not been informed by the Probation Department of any development regarding the revised menus.

After discussion, Commissioner Sorkin's verbal report was received and filed.

10. Mental Health Transition Age Youth (TAY) Workgroup.

- Susan F. Friedman, Workgroup Chair (11-1579)

Vice Chair Friedman reported the following:

- The Mental Health Workgroup (Workgroup) is comprised of Commissioners Berger, Kang, Kleinberg, Savelle, Curry and Trevino-Powell, and she is the Chair of the Workgroup.
- The Workgroup has been committed to obtaining information on the amount of funding that the Department of Mental Health (DMH) is allocating to the Transition Age Youth (TAY). While the Workgroup received initial information from DMH, the information provided was difficult to review and ascertain the exact amount of funding provided to the TAY population.
- To date, the Workgroup has received a second set of numbers from DMH that revealed that 76 percent of money allocated to TAY has gone unspent. Since then, the Workgroup has been in close contact with Robin Kay, Chief Deputy Director for DMH in an effort to obtain any developments on unspent TAY Funds. The Workgroup was then provided with a third set of numbers, which provided a clearer picture of the unspent money and indicated that that under the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), DMH must save a certain amount of money in a Prudence Reserve Account to ensure that mental health services will not be interrupted during budgetary shortfalls.
- She visited Challenger Memorial Youth Center and spoke to the juveniles there who indicated that they have not been seen by a therapist since November 2010. The staff member in charge of therapy also confirmed that they did not have a therapist until November 2010. Currently, youth are seeing a therapist once a week. Additionally, there is a psychiatrist who visits twice a week to check on the juveniles who are on medication.

- In March, Mayor Antonovich requested that DMH provide a detailed report on MHSA funding for TAY since the inception of the MHSA. DMH has several distinct programs available for TAY and for Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI). However, Ms. Kay noted that DMH has been unable to roll out PEI, and that no data on outcomes is currently available.

After discussion, Vice Chair Friedman's verbal report was received and filed.

11. Mental Health Children's Workgroup
- Genevra Berger, Workgroup Chair (11-1617)

This item was continued to a subsequent Commission meeting at the request of the Chair.

V. DISCUSSIONS

12. Discussion and approval of a recommendation by the Childhood Wellness Committee to send a letter to the Board of Supervisors (Board) regarding the need to address childhood asthma for children in child protective services. (Relates to Agenda No. 9) (11-1889)

Commissioner Sorkin reported the following:

- The Childhood Wellness Committee (Committee) recently discussed childhood asthma.
- Currently, there are over 200 children that are F-Rate in DCFS. F-Rate children are children that require additional medical treatment or procedures per a doctor's recommendation. The Committee is concerned with the placement of F-Rate children in homes of active smokers. To that end, the Committee drafted a recommendation to the Board regarding the placement of foster children in homes with smokers.

After discussion, the Commission referred the aforementioned recommendation back to the Committee and suggested that the Committee discuss the matter with DCFS prior to sending a letter to the Board. Commissioner Sorkin agreed to meet with DCFS representatives and report back to the Commission at a subsequent Commission meeting.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

13. Discussion regarding Commission Committees and Workgroups.
- Chair (11-1625)

This item was continued to a subsequent Commission meeting at the request of the Chair.

14. Discussion on AB 73 (Feuer) Dependency proceedings “public access,” and approval of a letter to the Honorable Mike Feuer, Assemblymember, 42nd Assembly District, in support of AB 73. (Continued from the meeting of March 21, 2011)
- Susan F. Friedman
 - Helen A. Kleinberg

During discussion, the Commission revised the letter as follows:

Page 1 Paragraph 1

The Commission has a long history of advocating on behalf of children, and we believe your bill would help to ensure that children receive **more quality appropriate** representation during dependency proceedings.

Page 1 Paragraph 2

The Commission stands with local leaders and entities that support your bill including Judge Michael Nash, the Presiding Judge of the **Juvenile and Dependency Courts** in Los Angeles, the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

Page 2 Paragraph 1

Regardless of where this new policy is introduced, we expect that the duration of the pilot will be long enough, allowing all stakeholders to adjust to change, and **to include an evaluation that focuses on outcomes and client feedback** ~~recognize the benefits of this new way of working.~~ (11-1270)

After discussion, and on motion of Commissioner Kleinberg and seconded by Vice Chair Friedman, unanimously carried (Commissioner Rudnick being absent), this item was approved as amended.

Attachments: [AB 73](#)
[SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

15. DCFS Acting Director's Report by Jackie Contreras, Chief Deputy Director, DCFS. (11-1581)

There were none.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

16. Matters not on the posted agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) referred to staff or placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action came to the attention of the Committee subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (11-1792)

There were none.

Public Comment

17. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (11-1583)

No member of the public addressed the Commission.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

18. Announcements for the meeting of April 18, 2011. (11-1585)

There were none.

Adjournment

19. Adjournment for the meeting of April 18, 2011. (11-1238)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.